

New National Ombudsman Appointed

Michael Barrera, an attorney from Kansas City and the former owner and manager of several small businesses, has been named by President Bush to lead the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of the National Ombudsman.

"As National Ombudsman, Michael Barrera has a crucial job to perform in reducing the federal regulatory stranglehold

upon small businesses," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "He will ensure that federal regulatory enforcement and compliance actions are fairly applied to save time and burdensome expense for small business owners."

Barrera's position as National Ombudsman was created by Congress in 1996 under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA). This legislation empowers the National Ombudsman to receive, investigate, and report complaints and comments from small business owners regarding federal regulatory enforcement and compliance actions.

The act also created 10 Regional Fairness Boards to provide small businesses with the opportunity to comment on enforcement activity by federal regulatory agencies.

"Through this provision, Congress and the President created a forum for small businesses to participate in the regulatory process by establishing a process for expressing their views and sharing their experiences about federal regulatory activity," said Barreto.

Barrera received his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1989 and a bachelor's



Michael Barrera

degree from Kansas State University in 1982. He is a member of the Missouri Bar Association, Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and Hispanic Bar Association, and is a former member of the Texas Bar Association.

In private practice, he co-founded two law firms in Kansas City focusing on general civil litigation, small business startups, workers' compensation, criminal defense, and personal injury. Barrera's legal experience includes service as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Jackson County, Mo.

In addition to running two law firms, Mr. Barrera's small business experience includes management of two family-owned restaurants in the Kansas City area. As past chairman and president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City, he helped increase membership by 600 percent and corporate funding by 400 percent.

Regulatory Fairness Hearing Held in Indianapolis

On December 4, 2001, the Office of the National Ombudsman



Edward J. Bowman, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business, took the opportunity to make remarks to the SBA National Ombudsman.

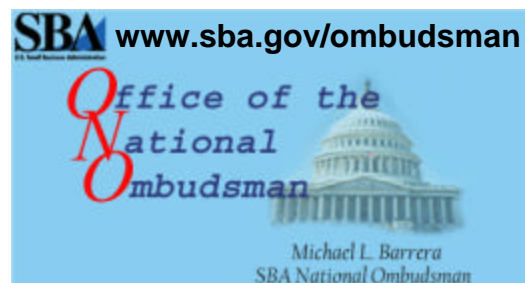
conducted a Regulatory Fairness Hearing at the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis.

The first regulatory hearing to be held in Indiana offered small businesses and trade/business associations a prime opportunity to offer feedback and suggestions on

federal government regulatory enforcement and compliance actions affecting small businesses.

Approximately 60 individuals attended the hearing that featured testimony and comments from seven individuals. Several trade association groups, small business organizations, and small business owners presented remarks.

For more information about the Office of the National Ombudsman, visit their website at www.sba.gov/ombudsman or call 1-888-REG-FAIR.



SBA Launches New Internet Site for America's Small Businesses

Small business owners now will have access to legal and regulatory business information at their fingertips through *BusinessLaw.gov* – a new Web site designed to help them reduce the burden of complying with laws and regulations.

BusinessLaw.gov helps end-users identify and solve their problems by using searchable "frequently asked questions" and interactive digital guides called "business wizards." These tools lead small business customers to the answers they need at every stage of the regulatory cycle.

In addition to serving as the foundation for a central business, local, state and federal regulatory compliance resource for entrepreneurs, the site can be used by business managers, counselors, teachers and legal professionals as an educational guide.